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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 4 October 1990, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. MAKKAWI (Vice-President)	(Lebanon)
later:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. RUKASHAZA (Vice-President)	(Rwanda)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statement made by

Mr. Nata (Benin)

Address by Mr. Arthur Robinson, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

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Statements made by

Mr. Oumar (Chad)
Mr. Vokouma (Burkina Faso)

Address by Mr. Hans Brunhart, Prime Minister of the Principality of Liechtenstein

Statement made by

Mr. Adan (Somalia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. NATA (Benin) (interpretation from French): Sir, allow me, first of all, to follow the example of the eminent speakers preceding me in addressing this Assembly and convey to you the warm congratulations of the Republic of Benin on your well deserved election as President of the General Assembly at the forty-fifth session. Being familiar with your proven professional competence, your wide-ranging experience in international affairs and your exceptional human qualities, the delegation of Benin is convinced that under your guidance the work of this session will be highly successful. I take pleasure also in paying a special tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Garba, who performed in a very skilful and effective manner the task of conducting the work of the General Assembly not only at the forty-fourth session but at three very important special sessions. Africa as a whole is proud of him and what he has accomplished.

I feel it is my duty on this occasion also to pay a heartfelt tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar. His intelligence and his dedication have significantly strengthened this Organization. The sound initiatives he has taken and his tireless efforts to promote the maintenance of international peace and security have greatly enhanced the prestige of the United Nations. This tribute applies also to the Secretary-General's associates and colleagues near and far, who have given so much of themselves in striving to ensure that our Organization works effectively and that the noble ideals underlying its existence prevail in the world. The excellent annual report of the Secretary-General, on which I take pleasure in complimenting him publicly today, reflects the present prestige and unique role of the United Nations on the international scene.

(Mr. Nata, Benin)

I should like also to congratulate the delegation of Liechtenstein, whose country has just been admitted as a Member of the United Nations.

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, history is undergoing changes of exceptional depth and scope which call on mankind more and more pressingly to exercise its collective conscience. With the passing of each month and each week we see further transformations taking place in the old international geo-political order.

The era of confrontation is being gradually replaced by one of co-operation, and instead of bloc politics we are seeing the emergence and reinforcement of a spirit of solidarity and a heightened awareness of the need for complimentary approaches.

A particularly striking symbol of this positive and healthy development in our times is, it seems to me, the reunification of Germany, the long-standing and legitimate dream of the German people, for so long jeopardized and delayed by the cold war but now at last a reality which we all applaud.

However promising it may appear, the new international climate that now prevails should not blind us, amid the euphoria of real advances in democracy, freedom and international co-operation, to the fact that our world is still encumbered by dangerous imbalances, hotbeds of tension and intolerable injustices.

The profound changes that are taking place will have fallen short of their ultimate objective if they fail to take into account all regional conflicts and to find the proper resolution of an issue that has become of primary importance for an Organization that seeks to embody world-wide solidarity, namely, the fundamental problems of North-South relations and in particular those of the African debt and the continued impoverishment of the continent of Africa.

(Mr. Nata, Benin)

The reforms that have been taking place in Eastern Europe have very quickly evoked active solidarity on the part of the Western world, and we can only welcome that. Our Western partners, furthermore, assure us that the vital assistance that they lend our economies will not cease in consequence. Nevertheless, I believe that everyone will appreciate our anxieties, confronted with the continued worsening of our situation, when we see the field of intervention of our traditional assistance providers being thus extended.

I should like to take this opportunity to praise the far-sightedness of Mr. Mitterrand, President of the French Republic, and the bold initiatives he is taking to promote development and to bring about the establishment of a fairer and more balanced world order. The great and noble ideas that he champions with such admirable forcefulness and tenacity for the establishment of a more generous and rational world order and the relevant proposals he recently made in Paris at the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries will, we hope, be appreciated and acted upon by the industrialized countries, for our countries have need of assistance and deserve to be better supported - and I am thinking here particularly of Africa.

(Mr. Nata, Benin)

Africa has suffered greatly from the distortions and injustices inherent in the way the world economic system is organized, but it is determined to overcome them, and to that end, it has already made enormous sacrifices.

I particularly welcome, in this respect, the presence in this Hall of the delegation of Namibia, whose people, on 21 March 1990, at the cost of a long and heroic struggle, acceded to independence and sovereignty under the auspices of the United Nations, which successfully organized and conducted the elections that made it possible to establish the first free institutions in that country.

The success thus achieved, with the active support of the entire international community, must be strengthened. It is therefore vital for us to do our utmost to ensure that Walvis Bay, Namibia's only deep-water port, illegally made part of South Africa, is unconditionally returned to the new State as soon as possible.

It is now clear that the combined effects of the pressure applied by the international community and the tenacious struggle of the black majority in South Africa have prevailed over the inhuman apartheid system. Nelson Mandela and some of his companions in captivity are free. Even though much remains to be achieved in South Africa, we cannot fail to see that apartheid has been shaken to its very foundations, and we must accord President De Klerk the historical credit he deserves in that irreversible process. Unfortunately, there is still, no doubt, a long road, full of pitfalls, to be travelled before there will be a non-racial, free society in South Africa. The murderous violence that has been incited, encouraged and kept going by those who do not intend to renounce apartheid proves this very clearly.

For that reason, all the States Members of the United Nations must remain vigilant and mobilized until the odious apartheid system has been fully dismantled. Then and only then will South Africa be able to become a truly great

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country that has finally renounced its role of policeman, so that it can work positively for peace, reconciliation and progress in all of southern Africa. The peoples of that region aspire to peace and development, and hope that a joint effort will be made by all to bring about a cease-fire and then the peace needed for reconstruction.

In any event, we earnestly hope that the national reconciliation processes in Angola and Mozambique will continue normally, in order to put an end to their internal conflicts and bring about the peace longed for by the suffering people of those countries.

I must now speak about the unhappy civil war in Liberia. The events in that country show to what tragic extremes any country may go when its people are subjected to the combined effects of poverty, dictatorship and corruption. There are some, either ill-informed or ill-intentioned, who keep telling us that tribalism is an inescapable fact of life that rules our destiny and is the primary cause of all Africa's ills. I would say, however, that Africa is becoming more and more aware of what its future requires, a future that cannot be fully secured except by large-scale integration and co-operation. In the depths of its soul, Africa aspires to economic and social progress in democracy and freedom. The horrifying images of the fratricidal war in Liberia challenge the consciences of us all, particularly of the the most powerful among us.

Liberia must be helped to end its self-destruction and the atrocities. It must be helped to become once again a sovereign State in which social peace and harmony reign. Africa must assume its responsibilities in this respect, through the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the subregional organizations, in accordance with the rules and principles it has set itself and in keeping with the higher interests of the African peoples.

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(Mr. Nata, Benin)

In northern Africa, where the Governments and peoples of the Maghreb are seeking greater co-operation, the praiseworthy efforts of our Secretary-General have not yet succeeded in bringing peace to Western Sahara. Benin reaffirms its support for the initiatives of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and hopes that the settlement plan set out in Security Council resolution 658 (1990) will bring about a self-determination referendum for the people of Western Sahara.

Since our last session, the situation in the Middle East has not improved at all. On the contrary, it is more explosive today than it ever was. Just as we were rejoicing at the hope for peace taking shape between Iran and Iraq, the Gulf crisis rekindled all the tensions and revealed in their most threatening aspect the dangers and anxieties which beset that particularly sensitive part of the world.

The Republic of Benin takes the view that mankind faces real and pressing dangers if we do not reach, without delay, a global settlement of the problems of the Middle East. In our opinion, only an international conference under United Nations auspices, with participation on an equal footing by all the parties concerned, can solve those problems effectively and achieve a lasting peace which will guarantee the existence of Israel and of the Palestinian State within secure and recognized boundaries. Without such a conference, how would it be possible to put an end to the interminable war in Lebanon, to the destruction of that country, to the tragedy of the hostages and to terrorism?

The Gulf crisis clearly shows that we cannot put off those vital settlements any longer without plunging the whole region into general ruin, desolation and instability, which will obviously have incalculable tragic consequences elsewhere in the world.

(Mr. Nata, Benin)

We have stated in the past what we thought about the Iraqi-Kuwaiti conflict. The principle, held dear by the OAU, that the frontiers inherited from colonization must be inviolable, even if, in the final analysis, they satisfy nobody, is a very wise one. No lasting progress can be achieved by force, hegemonism or outright annexation. If the law of the jungle is encouraged instead of being stigmatized and combated, that is tantamount to justifying an order which condemns small countries to being arbitrarily attacked and dominated by those that are stronger. Respect for the norms of international law promotes progress, particularly for our States, which face the greed and hegemonism of the great Powers and of countries which possess some measure of power.

The annexation of Kuwait by Iraq has not helped the peoples of the region; it is an unjustified and inadmissible act which cannot and must not be condoned. Iraq must withdraw its troops from Kuwait unconditionally and immediately and restore the lawful and legitimate authorities of that country. Benin associates itself with any action to that end, in particular the effective implementation of all the Security Council resolutions on the subject.

(Mr. Nata, Benin)

The situations in Afghanistan and Cambodia also call for our close attention. Benin hopes that the current negotiations will allow those two countries to regain peace and unity.

The peaceful reunification of the two Yemens on 22 May 1990, and that of the two Germanys on 3 October 1990, should prompt the international community to step up its work to bring about a peaceful reunification of the two Koreas. Benin, which has restored its diplomatic relations with South Korea and which fervently hopes that it will be able to maintain and even strengthen its long-standing relations of friendship and co-operation with North Korea, will continue to strive actively for the achievement of unity and the independent and peaceful reconciliation of the peninsula.

In Central America, Benin welcomes all the work now under way to restore peace and security to that region.

Now that we are seeing the end of the cold war and bloc politics, the most powerful among us should address themselves resolutely to defusing regional conflicts and should devote the necessary means to terminating the arms race and combatting famine, poverty and disease. For, as we approach the end of the twentieth century, those scourges continue to be the daily lot of more than half of mankind, despite the tremendous resources with which the world is endowed and the fantastic advances of science and technology.

The economic situation of the developing countries is hardly improving. It has even further deteriorated, and that is certainly the most serious threat to international peace and security. It is clear to all, in fact, that an order that allows half of the world to die of hunger and ignorance is not working towards peace and stability.

(Mr. Nata, Benin)

Last May, at the end of the work of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to international economic co-operation, the Declaration adopted by the participants certainly sounded the alarm once again. That Declaration undoubtedly testifies to a greater awareness and should promote a positive change in international economic relations. It was in fact stressed that countries must draft their national policies so as to promote the liberalization of trade and to respond with appropriate flexibility to the changes in the world economy.

From 3 to 14 September 1990 the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries was held in Paris, focussing on the economic and social situation in those countries. In the Final Declaration, adopted at the end of the Conference, it was recommended that the international community pay particular attention to that category of countries, given the specific nature of the crucial problems facing them.

In this context, I should like to mention particularly the very disturbing situation of Africa. On this subject, the President of Egypt, Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, then Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, stated in his message on the occasion of the celebration of Africa Day on 25 May 1990:

> "The time has come for international public opinion to become aware of the tragedy raging in Africa. The time has come for real dialogue and solid and fruitful co-operation to develop between North and South. Debtor and creditor countries must do their utmost to find concrete and effective ways and means of improving the economic situation of the African countries and of easing their acute financial crisis."

We are obliged to note today that the resolutions for a solution to the critical economic situation in Africa have not been implemented. The programmes

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adopted by common agreement, with their many promises, have not been carried out. Indeed, 1990 is drawing to a close and the Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-1990, adopted by our Organization four years ago, is still far from achieving the goals set. That is why we urgently appeal to the developed countries finally to honour their commitment to provide sufficient resources to supplement and support Africa's development efforts.

The reality today is that African States are being crushed by the burden of external debt, which has grown constantly over the years. Nevertheless, I should like to pay a tribute here to the praiseworthy efforts of certain creditor countries that have agreed to a partial deferral or forgiveness of certain debts of the third-world countries in general and of certain African debts in particular. Benin has benefitted from these generous and greatly appreciated actions. We hope that, in the context of global agreement, these gestures will be turned into systematic policy. There is no other way out if we are to avoid disaster.

Africa has already made and is still making enormous sacrifices. Many countries have, willy-nilly, adopted structural-adjustment programmes with the Bretton Woods institutions. We have courageously carried out economic and political reforms, improved our management systems, and combated corruption. Have we not thus sufficiently lifted our part of the burden? But the harsh restrictions and many privations resulting from this must not plunge our peoples and States into despair, social unrest and political instability. It is thus more urgent today than ever before to build and strengthen hope for tomorrow's generations.

The curtains have barely been rung down on the World Summit for Children, which was held in New York from 29 to 30 September and in which I had the honour to participate on behalf of my country. A Declaration and a Plan of Action were adopted for the survival, protection and development of the child. The Summit has

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had the success demanded by the importance of the question. My delegation is very grateful to the Summit's initiators and organizers and hopes that the positive results will be translated as soon as possible into concrete actions for millions of innocent human beings.

But the people of tomorrow for whom we are trying to build a better future may not reach adulthood if the growing threat that hangs over the human species because of the production of dangerous waste is not eliminated now by joint international action.

Aware that the solution of ecological problems and the protection of the environment require co-ordination of States' activities and initiatives, through the adoption of urgent decisions or subregional, regional or world measures, Benin will participate actively in the organizing of the pan-African conference on the environment and lasting development that will be held in Bamako, Mali, and in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, planned for June 1992 in Brazil.

(Mr. Nata, Benin)

I should like to take this opportunity to inform the Assembly that the new Constitution, which will soon be put to a referendum in my country, provides clear provisions in the area of applying the resolutions and recommendations of certain international and inter-African organizations relating to the acceleration by States of the process of inclusion in national legislation of regulations and measures on protection of the environment as provided by international law.

Moreover, aware that the individual remains the subject and prime mover of any development and that there can be no real and lasting progress without freedom, new Benin, in accordance with the resolutions of the National Conference of Driving Forces of the Nation, held in Coton ou from 19 to 28 February 1990, has committed itself irreversibly to the road of building a State based on law and the active promotion and defence of human rights and the rights of peoples.

In fact, firmly resolved to take in hand and to assume fully its national destiny in unity and peace, the Beninese people, thus rediscovering its values and its profound traditions, has decided to implement a gradual change of régime. At the end of its work the Conference of Driving Forces of the Nation, set up a High Council for the Republic, given legislative prerogatives, and elected a Prime Minister, who formed the transition Government to carry out all the changes, including the setting up of new institutions, which will be introduced during 1991.

Hence the press has been free and newspapers are multiplying in the country. The political parties set up are freely carrying out their activities. The main international instruments for the protection and defence of human rights have been ratified. There is a new atmosphere for the people of Benin.

As Members no doubt know, the Benin Commission on Human Rights has been set up; it includes personalities from various walks of life. We have also set up a League for the Defence of Human Rights, which also includes former political prisoners.

(Mr. Nata, Benin)

I have the honour, the satisfaction and the pride to confirm that there are no longer any political prisoners in Benin. This has been fully recognized by Amnesty International in correspondence sent to me recently. Any further arrest or detention for political or ideological opinions has now been banned, and the people of Benin intend that it should always be so.

Allow me to say a few words on the completely new political context in which the general policy of the Republic of Benin now lies. I crave your indulgence to speak about the political life of my country but, as representatives know, like the political life of each of your countries, it is reflected on its international relations.

In the Republic of Benin today a new way of thinking has been born with the democratic renewal that, with ardour and determination, has brought the essential elements of democracy - that is, a Government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Now, and I stress this, fundamental freedoms of all kinds, political pluralism, ideological non-alignment, separation of powers - legislative, and executive and the judiciary - and promotion and defence of human rights and the rights of peoples - all are concrete realities the people of Benin have been experiencing and implementing since the establishment of the democratic renewal.

With the democratic renewal, we want to attain a great objective, a great project, that is, the deep transformation of society in Benin and the eradication of fatalism. We want to create a new person, because we believe in a new Africa. One of the main principles of our undertaking is transparency - transparency in affairs of State, transparency in justice, transparency in management of the economy and of public property.

(Mr. Nata, Benin)

In other words, the democratic renewal is aimed at giving new life to a people through building a State based on law, and new hope to a continent for which the gloomiest of futures is regularly predicted.

We have dared to dream of a new world!

Everyone can appreciate that a country grouped among the least developed, not to say among the poorest of the world, which, in such a short time has managed to put in place so many positive conditions needs support of a special and exceptional kind, because it is carrying out a democratic process in keeping with the profound aspirations of its people.

This people, the people of Benin, recognize, with others, that between democracy and development there is a logical link and an almost mathematical relationship, which the National Conference of Cotonou graphically established. It is indisputable that the road leading to full democracy is long and full of pitfalls. But we have no other alternative to democracy.

This is why I should like to make an urgent appeal to the industrialized countries and to the international organizations to give massive aid to nascent democracies in such developing countries as Benin so that they may have at their disposal as soon as possible the necessary conditions and the means for consolidation and thereby avoid economic stagnation and all kinds of evils and scourges.

The forty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations will, we ardently hope, make it possible for us to enhance our achievements in maintaining international peace and security.

We hope also that the understanding between the two super-Powers and the East-West rapprochement noted over the last two years will promote economic détente and will be turned into concrete measures aimed at easing the burden of the

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external debt of the developing countries and increasing assistance from the developed countries through substantial financial resources indispensable for carrying out viable socio-economic plans.

New Benin calls whole-heartedly for this new international order. Having courageously assumed its share of responsibility, it hopes that it can count on international co-operation.

Forgive me, Sir, if I have abused your patience and that of the distinguished representatives. The present state of our world requires that we stress certain points. And I also wanted to express and share the hope of a people that has resolutely started out on the arduous road to freedom and that, determined to take charge and to conquer fear, wretchedness and fatalism through its own abilities, also looks forward to enjoying the international co-operation and solidarity in which it profoundly believes.

ADDRESS BY MR. ARTHUR ROBINSON, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Arthur Robinson, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Arthur Robinson, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. ROBINSON (Trinidad and Tobago): May I on behalf of my Government add my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election as President of this session of the General Assembly. The session takes place at another crucial juncture in human history. It is a moment which requires strong commitment and enlightened guidance. Fortunately, these have been the hallmarks of the diplomacy of your remarkable country over the years. For that reason we are convinced that your presidency will contribute significantly to a harmonious and successful session.

My delegation also pays a tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Joseph Garba of Nigeria, for his exemplary leadership throughout the forty-fourth session.

We extend a hearty welcome to our new Member, Liechtenstein.

The unexpected, unprecedented and profound changes which have occurred in the world over the past year make the beginning of the 1990s one of the most exciting times in modern history. The most rigid political and economic systems have, overnight as it were, been radically transformed. Iron-cast barriers have been broken down. We have witnessed the passionate determination and irrepressible will of millions of people in concerted action for freedom. Super-Power competition and rivalry are being replaced by co-operation. Disengagement from authoritarian rule gathers pace globally. Finally, the prospects appear more favourable than ever for the United Nations to play the role envisaged for it in 1945 by the founding fathers.

We applaud these far-reaching changes, which have altered profoundly, and I trust irreversibly, once familiar features of the international landscape. The international community now enters confidently into the post-cold-war era. It is a time vibrant with hope and promise. It is also a time of continuing challenges and perils, as we have seen dramatically demonstrated in the current situation in the Middle East. The end of the cold war has not brought an end to attitudes,

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assumptions and reflexes of bygone eras. Even as arms reduction takes place in the main theatre of past East-West confrontation, arms races are intensifying in other regions, leading to the increasing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. A false and elusive security continues to be sought in military hardware.

Yet it should be noted that the end of the post-Second-World-War dispensation in Europe - an end symbolized so dramatically just two days ago by millions in a reunited Berlin - was brought about not by force of arms but by economic development, technological progress and the democratic aspirations of peoples. Herein, I suggest, lies a lesson for the entire international community as we search for new underpinnings for stability and security and for the establishment of a new international order.

Although the dramatic improvement in East-West relations and the radical changes in Eastern Europe have captured our attention, profound transformations have also taken place in other parts of the globe. It is in this context that we feel encouraged by the decision of the parties to the Cambodian dispute to sit around the negotiating table. Similarly, we are heartened by the fact that representatives of the Korean people have finally set aside mutual distrust and hostility and have taken the first, tentative steps on the road to reconciliation.

Earlier this year the Assembly welcomed to its ranks an independent and sovereign Namibia after decades of struggle against oppression. In so doing the international community fulfilled a mandate dating back to the earliest years of the United Nations. With the independence of Namibia the final chapter in the history of colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa has nearly come to an end - a fact which must strengthen the resolve to excise for all time the cancer of apartheid.

The epic struggle, heroic sacrifice and iron determination of one man, Nelson Mandela, have not gone unnoticed by the world Organization. With his

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release from prison, the long dark night of apartheid began to give way to a glimmer of hope for the new dawn. The régime in Pretoria, it would appear, has at last recognized that the system of apartheid can no longer be sustained. State President De Klerk has indicated by his latest pronouncements that Pretoria may now finally be prepared to break with the past. It is, however, critical that the South African régime accelerate the process of change, and move rapidly from "talks about talks" to genuinely constructive dialogue with the leadership of the black majority on the key issues which would lead to the formation of a non-racial and democratic society.

The disturbing issue of violence in the townships, particularly in Natal and the Transvaal, needs to be addressed urgently by both Pretoria and the black leadership. Continued violence would place in jeopardy the recent political gains made by the majority; it would derail the nascent negotiating process; it would provide a pretext for those forces opposed to a change of the status quo in that troubled country. Trinidad and Tobago wishes to reiterate, and cannot overemphasize, that in the interest of all of us this opportunity to move South Africa away from apartheid must not be squandered. The principal actors and the stage are in South Africa, but the effects of failure would be global.

While encouraging the process of reconciliation and negotiation in South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago remains mindful of the need for the international community to maintain existing sanctions until meaningful and permanent change has taken place. In this context we urge those States with influence in Pretoria to intensify their efforts to persuade that régime to quicken the process of fundamental change.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

We welcome wholeheartedly the new role of the United Nations in the assistance provided to Namibia in the conduct of free and fair elections. In this process Trinidad and Tobago felt honoured to play a part. We strongly endorse the proposal of the President of the United States of America for a permanent capability in the United Nations to render this kind of assistance to countries that seek it.

The successful conduct of internationally monitored free and fair elections in Nicaragua, in which my own country played a part under the aegis of the Organization of American States, bodes well for the entire region; and Trinidad and Tobago hopes that both Government and Opposition in Nicaragua will seek to establish an environment which will encourage sustained peace and development.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

We are truly saddened by the recent turn of events in Haiti, although the latest information seems to give some cause for optimism. Growing tensions and instability have resulted in the postponement of the registration process and possibly of the elections. We remain hopeful, however, that the schedule for the inauguration of the elected President of the Republic on 7 February 1991 will be honoured.

Trinidad and Tobago continues to play its part in the effort to bring about democratic changes in Haiti. In this regard we have joined with our fellow colleagues in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), with the Organization of American States (OAS) and with other Members of the United Nations itself in ongoing efforts to achieve this objective.

It is ironic that while Trinidad and Tobago, a free, open and democratic society, has been assisting in establishing the democratic process in other States, our own democracy was recently imperilled in a most extraordinary manner.

A new breed of fanatics claiming divine inspiration, but acting rather under satanic impulse, blew up our police headquarters, shot their way into our Parliament, held the Prime Minister, ministers, parliamentarians and other citizens at gunpoint, bound them hand and foot, inflicted torture, shot the Prime Minister in his leg, caused several fatalities and held all under threat of death. This small, but rash and reckless band of adventurers seized the only television station, committed and instigated sundry other acts of damage and disorder while its leader proclaimed a new government without a single intelligent clew as to what was to be done thereafter.

I am sure that you, Mr. President, like our highly respected Secretary-General and all representatives in this Hall, would agree that it speaks volumes for the people of our country that we were able to overcome this peril without any external intervention. May I express, on behalf of my country, my gratitude to our CARICOM

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colleagues, Venezuela, other hemispheric countries and countries beyond the hemisphere which responded in the crisis to our need for food, medical and other essential supplies, and may I also express our deep gratitude for the numerous expressions of moral support that we received from all parts of the world. Trials of the offenders are now taking place, but the situation still poses a challenge to our security and legal systems.

As freedom enlarges and expands and more democratic systems are established, notably in Eastern Europe, but elsewhere as well, new issues of security are certain to arise. We need to address this question of security on two fronts: it is essential that there be the fullest possible collaboration among States at regional and international levels in the investigation, prosecution and elimination of serious crimes. Events such as I have described as occurring in Trinidad and Tobago are usually linked to criminal activities in other States. The spread of democracy and open societies adds a new urgency to collaborative measures which must be taken by the international community to contain these criminal acts.

The most pernicious manifestations of international criminal activity, including the illicit traffic in drugs and terrorism, continue even as we enter this United Nations Decade of International Law. Governments of large and small States are becoming increasingly aware that international criminal activity is not only lucrative, efficient and resilient, but is also resistent to control measures. More disturbingly, these forms of crime do not respect national frontiers or jurisdictions. It is a cruel irony that as our planet becomes smaller through advances in science and technology, especially in the field of communications, open societies have become more vulnerable to those who deal in terror, degradation and death.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

In response to the menace of international criminal activity, my delegation introduced at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly a new item which sought to establish an international criminal court. The General Assembly mandated the International Law Commission to examine that proposal and to submit a report at this session for its consideration.

We are convinced that an international criminal court will enhance and strengthen the capacity of the international community to deal with international crime. I have myself discussed this proposal at various international and regional bodies, including meetings with my fellow Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community. In June this year, a meeting of the Committee of Experts on an International Criminal Jurisdiction, held at Siracusa, Italy, building on the foundations laid down by scholarship and expertise over the years, fully supported and elaborated a comprehensive draft statute on such a court.

We are aware that the proposal for the establishment of an international criminal court has raised fundamental questions. Some of these relate to jurisdiction and sovereignty. There is no gainsaying that these issues are extremely important. They do not, however, present intractable problems and can be satisfactorily addressed in the interests of progress and our collective security.

Indeed, I am pleased to note that in its report the International Law Commission has advised that the establishment of an international criminal court is more feasible at this time and has recommended, moreover, that international traffic in drugs should be considered a crime against humanity.

Even more recently, the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Havana, passed by consensus a resolution encouraging the International Law Commission to continue its work in relation to the codification of international criminal law and the establishment of

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an international criminal court. In the resolution passed by the Congress, special provision was made for the protection of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States.

I am confident that there is now greater understanding of the utility and practicability of an international criminal jurisdiction by Member States and that, guided by the requisite political will and vision, substantial progress will be made at this session towards its establishment.

We conceive of an international criminal court, not as an end in itself or in isolation, but as part of a whole range of services required for effective law enforcement. Some of these services already exist in relations between States; I refer to exchanges of vital intelligence, both formal and informal; arrangements for the transfer of offenders between States under treaties of extradition or by other modalities; arrangements for the reciprocal recognition of judgements and orders; for the reception of evidence; and the wide range of co-operative and collaborative activity which the security and judicial services of friendly States already engage in routinely, both formally and informally.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

These mechanisms and practices are essential to our individual and collective security. Where they are absent, States must be encouraged to put them in place. Where they are already in place, they must be strengthened. A court will ensure the greater effectiveness of these administrative and judicial arrangements and greater protection for security and sovereignty, particularly of small States. Essentially, it is stability and world order that are at stake.

Neither a free State nor a free world can long endure without adequate safeguards for the rule of law.

Trinidad and Tobago has repeatedly condemned the use of force as a means of settling disputes. We cannot accept, and we strongly condemn, such forcible annexation of a member State of this body as has occurred in Kuwait. We reaffirm our unswerving commitment to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all States in accordance with the principles of our Charter. We urge that a peaceful resolution of the matter be found in a manner that restores the independence of Kuwait.

Security, however, cannot be looked at merely in terms of police and judicial functions, although these are essential parts of the equation. We must also move speedily and purposefully to tackle problems that inhibit social and economic development in the world today.

In many developing countries the symptoms of frustration and malaise are obvious. A punishing combination of external influences has drastically reduced real incomes and investment; annual growth rates continue to plummet; per capita gross national product continues to decline; non-fuel commodity prices have reached disastrously low levels; and deteriorating terms of trade militate against benefits from increased export earnings. The impact of these factors has been exacerbated

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

by the overwhelming debt crisis. The devastating cumulative effect of all this has been a large net transfer of resources from countries in the developing world to the developed world. I have said before, and I repeat, that no civilized community can tolerate the continuation of such a state of affairs.

The collective effort of the international community has yet to yield realistic and acceptable solutions to the immense and complicated problems created by external debt, debt servicing and this outward transfer of resources.

The debt strategies which have been proposed to date have not addressed the plight of middle-income debtor countries. Specific problems are sometimes masked because of the general use of per capita gross national product as the measurement of economic development. Attention needs to be given to the importance of expenditures in essential areas such as health, education, housing and social welfare. Development is too often perceived in terms of economic growth, while the factors which affect the quality of life are neglected.

If the real concerns of developing nations are ignored or are inadequately addressed, then the already great disparities between the North and South will increase dramatically and the gulf between them will widen. In this regard, support for the Uruguay Round and trade negotiations is imperative.

Let the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly set the stage for a collective response to the economic deterioration that has plunged many countries of the developing world into crisis, threatening their social cohesion, peace and security.

Trinidad and Tobago was pleased to have been a part of the historic World Summit for Children, held a few days ago. The faithful implementation of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the related Plan of Action will go a long way towards protecting the rights and improving the

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

lives of our children. My Government is committed to the strategies outlined in those agreements, and will pursue their implementation as vigorously as we have pursued strategies related to the advancement of women and other United Nations initiatives which place people at the centre of development.

Another particular concern of Trinidad and Tobago, as an island State, is the question of management and conservation of marine resources. Representatives will recall that the fortieth session of the General Assembly addressed the issue of large-scale pelagic fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas. The General Assembly noted that large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing was a highly indiscriminate and wasteful method that threatened the effective conservation of living marine resources. In Trinidad and Tobago it also threatens the livelihood of our artisanal fishermen.

Accordingly, in response to recent reports of vessels with large-scale driftnet fishing equipment operating off Trinidad and Tobago, my Government has imposed a ban on this type of fishing in its national waters and a prohibition of landing rights to vessels with such driftnet equipment. Trinidad and Tobago is the first country in the North Atlantic to have taken such definitive action.

Demonstrating our concern over environmental issues, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has undertaken to host the Seventh Latin American and Caribbean Conference of Ministers Responsible for the Environment, to be held from 15-23 of this month. It is expected that the Conference will formulate a regional action plan which will incorporate existing environmental policies, such as the Port-of-Spain Accord and the Amazonia Declaration, and lead in the coming months to concrete programmes of environmental action.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

My Government wishes to reiterate its full support for the proposed International Conference on Envircnment and Development, scheduled to be held in Brazil in 1992.

Already I perceive a sense of renewed vigour and commitment in this Organization, which embodies the hopes and aspirations of our community of nations. Let us work assiduously and unceasingly to increase respect for the rule of law, to advance the cause of justice and respect for the dignity of man and to improve the lot of our fellow human beings everywhere. Let this session attain new heights of human achievement. Let it match the aspirations of the millions who have so moved and inspired us by the cataclysmic changes that they have wrought in peace during the past year.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Arthur N. R. Robinson, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. OUMAR (Chad) (interpretation from French): The forty-fifth session of the General Assembly is taking place at a very special time in the history of the United Nations and of mankind. For the first time in more than two generations, the arms race between the major Powers seems, at last, to have ended, thus paving the way, as we all hope, to the understanding and co-operation, that all nations desire.*

Thus, Mr. Guido de Marco has succeeded General Joseph N. Garba of Nigeria as President of the General Assembly in circumstances that are very special and filled with great promise. The delegation of Chad offers him its warmest congratulations and wishes him and the other officers of the Assembly every success.

I wish also to extend the Chadian Government's friendly greetings and warmest congratulations to the Secretary-General of our Organization. We commend him for his dedication to the cause of peace and his tireless efforts to assist the peoples of the third world in combating destitution and poverty. Impelled by his energy and leadership, the United Nations successfully brought independence to Namibia, and, thanks to the concerted effort of the Members of the Organization, Nelson Mandela, a hero of the struggle for dignity and equality in South Africa, is

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* Mr. Makkawi (Lebanon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Oumar, Chad)

again free. As we welcome the presence of the sister nation of Namibia in the General Assembly, we venture to hope that we will soon see a multiracial delegation of South Africa occupying that country's seat in this Hall.

My delegation also congratulates the Principality of Liechenstein on its admission to the Organization as its 160th Member.

At the forty-fourth session, we saw the first signs of the end of the cold war. Throughout Central and Eastern Europe political liberalization has in a few months transformed relationships which had been frozen and seemed immutable for the past 40 years. The signals we got from the Malta Summit on 3 and 4 December 1989 were forerunners of the end of one period - the cold war - and the beginning of another, a period of dialogue and concerted action. Since then the words "peace", "freedom" and "democracy" have become our leitmotiv, the concepts driving the actions of the world.

Chad, for its part, did not wait for the East wind to blow over the rest of the world before embarking upon political changes. In fact, as early as 7 June 1982 the Government of the Third Republic began to lay the bases for genuine democracy in the country. It did so first by calling on the Chadian people for national reconciliation after the tragedies that had beset the country. Then, in 1987, it expelled the foreign occupation forces from the northern half of the country. And, finally, it set up in July 1988 the Constitutional Committee that produced the Constitution adopted by referendum on 10 December 1989. That referendum was also the process used to elect the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Al-Hadj Hissein Habre, for a term of seven years.

The new Constitution, which was a genuine product of the Chadian people and was adopted by a large majority vote of our people, today governs the public life of the country. Its provisions embody the universal principles of democracy and

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freedom, and thus the rights and duties of citizens - in other words, human rights. The institutions provided for under the new Constitution are beginning to come into being. Thus, on 8 July 1990 the Chadian electorate went to the polls to fill the 123 seats in the National Assembly. For the first time in the history of independent Chad, the voters were free to choose their representatives from among 436 candidates who were standing for election on an individual basis. The elections took place in a calm atmosphere, attesting to the political maturity which was acquired by the Chadian people during the long years of a war of aggression and was bolstered by national feeling forged by its suffering.

If political freedom is to bear fruit, it must go hand in hand with harmonious economic development. For that reason, as it seeks to bring about democratization in ways that take into account Chadian cultural values, the Government of the Republic of Chad has committed itself to a programme for the reconstruction and development of the country. Unfortunately, however, apart from the problems of war, the other scourges which Chad had to endure for years have once against raised their heads. I am referring specifically to drought and the pests that destroy crops and vegetation.

Chad, together with the rest of the Sahelian region, has suffered from a shortage of rainfall in 1990, reminiscent of the worst years of drought, famine and desertification. The current year will be one of the most disastrous for farming and the Chadian people already can hear famine knocking at their door. Therefore, once again, the Government of the Third Republic has the regrettable duty to make a pressing appeal to the international community, to all donor countries and agencies, to provide food assistance as promptly as possible to the neediest sectors of the Chadian population. As in the past, the Government of Chad will undertake to distribute that assistance to the beneficiaries in the most open fashion.

(Mr. Oumar, Chad)

Dependent as it is on one crop - cotton - Chad continues to suffer from the crisis that affected that sector in 1986. The very slight hardening of cotton prices in recent years has made the gradual reorganization of that sector possible, but at the same time Chad is trying to find other means of offsetting the budgetary losses occasioned by the restructuring.

With the primary objective of eradicating hunger and poverty in Chad, the Government of the Third Republic has made rural development the country's priority. This will involve improved health, a higher level of literacy and, above all, the mastering of agricultural research techniques in order to adapt the various crops to the country's climatic conditions and thus maximize the productivity. But, regrettably, the uncertainty of the climate has frustrated our efforts.

At the same time, the choice of this priority in no way represents neglect of the other sectors of the economy, which are equally important and to which we are paying great attention. But for a Sahilian country such as ours, assailed by drought and desertification, the assuring of our food supply becomes a daily concern that haunts us. In this respect, the substantial underground water reserves in Chad could be drawn upon through an irrigation programme in the arid and semi-arid areas of the country.

Contributions from friendly countries and international development agencies and organizations to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Chad, together with the massive participation of the major donors at the round-table on Chadian development, from 18 to 20 June 1990, lead us to hope that our struggle for food security will receive increasing support from our partners.

Similarly, the conference on education and employment to be held at the end of the year as part of our sectoral approach to development in Chad would be especially successful if our major partners were to take an active part.

(Mr. Oumar, Chad)

As we once again earnestly appeal to our donors to continue to lend us their invaluable support, we also wish to express to them the gratitude and appreciation of the Government and people of Chad. Our thanks go in particular to the Governments of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, the United States, the Netherlands, Switzerland, China, Saudi Arabia and many others that it would not be possible to name here, and also to development agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the European Economic Community (EEC) through the European Development Fund.

We would also like to pay a special tribute to those officials of UNDP who assisted us in preparing for the Geneva round-table as well as to France and the World Bank for their assistance in the preparations for the conference on education and employment.

Reconstruction and development in a country such as Chad represent a long-term undertaking. Mindful as we are of this fact, we are striving to rely, first and foremost, on ourselves, but, given our limited resources, we are also obliged to rely on the assistance of the international community as a whole if we are to achieve our objectives. In this regard, we are again this year submitting to the General Assembly a draft resolution on special assistance to Chad. We are confident that delegations will once again support this text as they have done in the last few years.

As we have always stressed, peace is a prerequisite of any economic and social progress. Chad has legitimate aspirations to peace while in no way neglecting the need to defend its territorial integrity and the dignity of its people.

(Mr. Oumar, Chad)

Open as we are to dialogue and co-operation, Chad is firmly resolved to live in peace with all its neighbours, without distinction. In that spirit, the Government of the Third Republic has professed its faith in the sound nature of the Chadian spirit, which is one of tolerance and hospitality. Unfortunately, this openness of spirit seems to have been regarded by certain neighbouring countries as weakness, to such a point that, at a certain moment in its history, Chad found itself almost entirely occupied and laid waste with its very existence as a State flouted.

The national uprising which ended that situation has also restored dignity to the Chadian people. Today, the people of Chad are united in looking towards the future, resolved to make their country a great nation.

It is in this perspective that we see the bilateral dialogue and the dialogue taking place in the ad hoc committee of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) concerning the Chad-Libya dispute which led to the cease-fire in September 1987 and to the signing of the Framework Agreement of Algiers on 31 August 1989 concerning the peaceful settlement of the territorial dispute between the two countries.

In this respect, even though conciliation has not led to the desired results, the Algiers Agreement has been respected by the two parties to the conflict as far as the ruling of the International Court of Justice is concerned.

Given the nature of the jurisprudence and the norms of international law in this area, together with the fact that the OAU has made uti possidetis the linchpin of the principle of the sacredness of the borders inherited from colonization, Chad continues to have confidence in the future rulings of the Court. Chad has confidence in the United Nations bodies and agencies in their role as organs responsible for safeguarding peace and security and preserving the sovereignty of small vulnerable nations.

(Mr. Oumar, Chad)

Respect for the norms and principles of international law should henceforth govern relations among States at a time when the major actors in international life are demonstrating their faith in the United Nations system in a very concrete manner.

Hope is being reborn in the hearts of billions of men and women who have always desired - seemingly in vain - an end to the cold war and to regional conflicts and longed for the dawning of greater justice in international relations. Now, only a few years away from the next millenium, the community of nations must welcome the changes in Eastern Europe which have suddenly relaxed the atmosphere to such an extent that it is now possible to hope that a nuclear war may be averted and that there are greater chances of ending regional conflicts.

The positive developments in South Africa, the independence of Namibia, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan are all, in this respect, palpable proof, and indeed logical consequences, of East-West détente. At the same time, the democratization of Central and Eastern Europe lead the people of that continent to hope for the realization in the near future of the Common European Home.

(Mr. Oumar, Chad)

But the fires of tension are by no means completely extinguished. In Asia, in Latin America, in Africa and in the Middle East, especially in the Gulf region, tensions persist and new ones arise. Bloody confrontations pose a dangerous threat to peace and security in those regions and throughout the world.

Everyone knows that the present Gulf crisis greatly transcends the boundaries of the States directly involved, going beyond the Middle East itself. It is a real time-bomb threatening the whole of mankind. It is clear that a military conflagration would destroy the entire region. While no one knows when or how it might be ended, it is certain that it would take an unacceptable number of innocent lives and would cause lasting disruption to economic and political life world-wide. Therefore, Chad joins the rest of the international community in calling for a rapid peaceful settlement to this dangerous conflict. It goes without saying that, to be viable, such a settlement must take account of the interests and concerns of all parties; it is also clear that no peaceful solution will be possible unless it is rooted in the legal and political norms and principles that are the foundation of international political life. In other words, it must have its basis in respect for international law, respect for the United Nations Charter and respect for the various resolutions adopted by the United Nations on this subject.

Aware of our own country's recent past, my delegation joins previous speakers in urgently appealing to the international community to do everything in its power to find peaceful solutions to all these conflicts. The present climate in international relations more than ever before favours positive co-operation to that end. We encourage the Secretary-General in his peace initiatives designed to ensure that understanding and concord prevail throughout the world. The universal peace to which we have aspired since the creation of the United Nations is within

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our grasp, and can be achieved if we bring the necessary means to bear. Future generations will judge us very harshly if we fail to grasp this unique opportunity to restore peace throughout the world. That peace must be just, lasting and comprehensive. It must take into account the dignity of all peoples and bring greater justice to relations among States.

While we cannot but welcome the independence of Namibia, apartheid continues to rear its ugly head in neighbouring South Africa, despite the talks under way between Pretoria and the African National Congress of South Africa. The evil minds that created that political system have even generated inter-tribal differences in order to delay further the elimination of racial discrimination.

Above all, justice must be manifested in international economic relations, where the inequality is most striking. The international economic situation seems to be far from benefiting from the improvements of recent years. Although growth has continued in developed market-economy countries, the countries of Latin America and Africa suffer from stagnation or even regression.

The causes of this deterioration were identified long ago and are well known. In particular, we note the contant major fall in commodity prices, the net transfer of resources to developed countries, the enormous debt burden and skyrocketing interest rates.

Over the past 30 years there has been no lack of United Nations initiatives designed to find overall solutions to the great challenges of the day: poverty, famine, ignorance and disease. The magnitude of these scourges cries out to the conscience of all, and the developing countries feel increasingly that everything is being done to delay the inevitable day of reckoning.

Africa, a continent on the way to being marginalized, is facing a real disaster, and nothing in the short term gives us hope that the trend will be

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reversed. Moreover, the blame for the crisis in the continent is being placed on the Africans themselves. As President Al-Haj Hissein Habre has said,

"A ferocious media campaign is now trying to show that problems of underdevelopment are due to some congenital lack of ability on the part of the Africans".

Poverty, exacerbated by policies of structural adjustment with a high social cost, is spreading, and threatens peace in many countries.

As I say, there has been no lack of initiatives, and the United Nations has a fundamental role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security as well as in the promotion of development. That is why the Declaration on economic co-operation adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the Paris Declaration on the Least Developed Countries, despite their scope, should be seen as important challenges for this final decade of the century.

The crucial problems confronting the developing countries and the least developed among them in particular can be solved only if accepted principles and objectives are applied in a comprehensive and integrated manner. In the final analysis, genuine international co-operation for development requires the political will of States, buttressed by a spirit of equity and, above all, a sense of justice. Without justice, North-South antagonisms could grow worse. The end of the cold war and of the arms race should provide an opportunity for all mankind to turn in the same direction and to direct its creative forces towards the development of the third world, the eradication of poverty, and scientific progress for the common good.

While democracy and human rights are central questions in development, what do human rights and individual freedoms mean to starving people huddled together in destitution and ignorance?

(Mr. Oumar, Chad)

Lags in various areas of development resulting from an unjust economic order are the basic causes of underdevelopment. Countries will not emerge from their situation by creating anarchy in over-indebted countries whose people live below the poverty line. To have some chance of success, political liberalization must be sustained and promoted by integrated economic development.

Similarly, the protection of the environment must not be achieved at the expense of the countries of the third world in general and Africa in particular. Nor must it be a pretext for unreasonable delay in carrying out development projects initiated by underdeveloped countries.

It goes without saying that for a Sahelian country like Chad, with so fragile an environment, protecting the ecosystem is of special importance to us as we formulate our development policies. If we are to push back the desert and conquer it, we need everyone's assistance.

(Mr. Oumar, Chad)

This session of the Assembly has seen the convening of the first World Summit for Children. That unique event was an extraordinary hymn to hope and to mankind's future. The heightened world awareness evidenced at that meeting with regard to the nature of the tragic sufferings of the planet's children and to the remedies needed is proof in itself of the resolve of nations and their leaders to meet all the challenges that endanger the coming generations. Chad takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to making its modest contribution to the building of a world finally free from poverty, exploitation, racism, oppression and war, a world in which peace, freedom, justice, mutual understanding and material and spiritual well-being will prevail.

Mr. VOKOUMA (Burkina Faso)(interpretation from French): Mr. President, events in Eastern and Central Europe that were gratifying to all of us occurred or were about to occur when the United States and the Soviet Union were meeting in your country. While congratulating you on being elected to your high office, I also wish to pay tribute to Malta, a non-aligned country that provided the background for one of the episodes that accompanied - and perhaps contributed to - the fundamental changes in present-day international relations.

I should also like to pay tribute to General Joseph Nanven Garba of Nigeria, who presided with talent and authority over the forty-fourth session of the Assembly, during which, inter alia, we adopted by consensus a Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa; that Declaration played a part in creating the international climate which led to the release of that great fighter, Nelson Mandela.

(Mr. Vokouma, Burkina Faso)

If the United Nations today is witnessing not a rebirth but a new birth, we also owe this to the tireless efforts, great patience and calm perseverance of the Secretary-General who, true to his mission and his responsibilities, has upheld against all odds the principles, purposes and objectives of the Charter. The independence of Namibia, which we welcomed here in April upon its admission to the Organization, was one of his principal concerns.

Just as we hail unified Yemen and unified Germany, we also welcome among us with particular pleasure Liechtenstein, whose initiative gives further proof of the universality of the Organization's usefulness in these difficult and uncertain times.

Barely had we witnessed the final throes of the East-West confrontation when we found ourselves at a new turning-point in history. A combination of geopolitics, selfish considerations, half-truths, cunning tricks and flagrant bias have brought us to our present pass. Iraq has invaded Kuwait, and Burkina Faso, like the rest of the international community, condemns that flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of the sovereign rights of a Member State. Today the situation is at worst an intolerable attack on law and justice and at best a conflict between law and justice.

Nevertheless, the clear-sightedness and experience of peoples prevent them from being misled by concealed interests that by their nature are constant and unchanging. Principles that were ignored in similar situations in the past are now being cited for the sake of those interests. In the name of that clear-sightedness and experience, I should like to set forth Burkina Faso's view of the problems that beset us and that make the struggle for justice and peace so long and so arduous.

(Mr. Yokouma, Burkina Faso)

The important political, economic and social changes that we have witnessed and participated in are occurring along a line and in a context that is gradually beginning to be seen for what it really is: a split papered over with the unkept promises of some and the unavowed purposes of others. By engaging in such fruitless exercises we are quite simply compromising the future of the world's children, even though last Sunday in this very Hall we solemnly recognized that "There can be no task nobler than giving every child a better future".

In whatever context we place them, the problems are numerous and the solutions few. A good climate makes a good harvest only if the seed is good. What kind of seed are we sowing?

In the Middle East the situation, under the impact of the events in the Gulf region, remains highly sensitive, the more so because we do not understand what difference there is between an annexation that took place two months ago and another that has now persisted and been developing in various unofficial but concrete forms for 22 years. The immigration of Soviet and Eastern European Jews to the occupied Arab territories is further inflaming an open wound. The intifadah continues to be a revolt against injustice and a call for justice to prevail.

The convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East, bringing together all the parties concerned, is becoming an increasingly pressing imperative for those who seek a genuine and definitive solution to the problem.

Lebanon, which has long been the victim of a conflict that is overwhelming it, awaits the restoration of its State and the coming of national reconciliation. We hope that the efforts of the Tripartite Commission will be successful.

With regard to Afghanistan, my country remains concerned at the pernicious continuance of fratricidal combat. A comprehensive political settlement in

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accordance with the consensus resolutions adopted at the forty-third and forty-fourth sessions of the General Assembly should be supported in order to achieve the unity and harmony needed for the country's reconstruction and development.

In Korea the opening of preliminary discussions at Seoul foreshadows a better future for reunification. Burkina Faso is of the view that one way to encourage that process would be to avoid taking negative and partisan attitudes and thus to enable the long-divided Korean people to reunite.

With regard to Cambodia, we hope that the framework document of 28 August 1990 drawn up by the five permanent members of the Security Council will lead to an agreement among all the parties to the conflict and that peace will come back to stay.

Reaffirming Burkina Faso's support for the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Cyprus, we hope that the Secretary-General's mission of good offices will bear fruit.

My continent, Africa, is prey to acute conflicts, for which, we feel, the international community should, in one way or another, help to find a peaceful settlement. More specifically, with regard to Western Sahara, Burkina Faso continues to support the joint good offices of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It expresses its satisfaction at the adoption of Security Council resolution 658 (1990) on 27 June 1990 and hopes that the organization of a true referendum on self-determination will bring lasting peace and stability to the region.

(Mr. Vokouma, Burkina Faso)

With regard to Liberia, Burkina Faso reaffirms its firm support for an appropriate solution and stresses the urgent need for increased humanitarian assistance to the Liberian people. Burkina Faso supports the convening of a special summit meeting of the Economic Community of West African States to promote reconciliation and a peaceful and definitive resolution of that fratricidal conflict.

In Mozambique and Angola, we encourage the efforts being carried out to restore peace through dialogue.

In South Africa, apartheid remains, and although Nelson Mandela is out of prison he is not yet free. Burkina Faso, along with the international community, is waiting for the abolition pure and simple of apartheid and is waiting for Mr. De Klerk to take irreversible steps in that direction. The economic sanctions are still necessary, and the South African people must maintain the same vigilance in the face of attempts at division and the fomenting of internal strife.

Agreement, co-operation and now interaction between the two military super-Powers mark a break with the past and are producing an impact on all international relations, particularly through the reducing of hot-beds of tension, the consolidation of the disarmament process and the functioning of the Security Council as it was envisaged in 1945.

I have already said that a good climate does not make a good harvest unless there is good seed. What do we have on the economic side? It is clear that at the end of the twentieth century we are witnessing a unique phenomenon. We are privileged witnesses of an acceleration of history with a scope that is difficult to measure. The only certainty is that we are watching the scene being set in the theatre of the unknown that the twentieth century has always been for the authors of science fiction.

(Mr. Vokouma, Burkina Faso)

The international community must set the scene, but it must take every precaution to ensure that there will not be a tragedy. In other words, the progress achieved by mankind in the political and technological areas throughout the twentieth century must not be compromised by economic distortions, which can lead only to a confrontation prejudicial to the welfare and the survival of the species.

There is an urgent need for North and South to learn to march together and in harmony so that neither enters the future a step behind. That was already, we need not recall, the main objective of the First United Nations Development Decade. Since then, and at the start of the Fourth Development Decade, disappointment has reached its peak among the poor; the poorest of the poor are filled with dispair, while others take refuge in shameful selfishness.

It is intolerable that today, in this era of abundance and technological successes that defy the imagination, more than a billion human beings live in absolute poverty; that as many - 900 million adults and 100 million children - are illiterate; that 1.7 billion have no access to drinking water; that 800 million are hungry; that one child in three is malnourished; and that 14 million children die before the age of five.

What is even more unacceptable, because it shows the failure of North-South co-operation, is that the flow of resources from developed countries to developing countries, which was positive 10 years ago, has been reversed outrageously, falling from $42.6 billion in 1980 to minus $33 billion today.

The indebtedness of the developing countries in 1990 exceeds $1,300 billion, with debt servicing of $200 billion. In view of the drop in commodity prices that the developing countries have suffered in the past few years, the deterioration in the terms of trade is only becoming worse. Thus, Burkina Faso, a cotton-exporting

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country, must today pay the equivalent of the value of 30 tons of its product to buy a tractor, as opposed to 10 tons in 1970. Because of this, any investment effort aimed at economic growth is dependent today on external assistance. We have seen that this assistance is an aberration in terms of flow of resources and is an unbearable burden in terms of dues and taxes. Moreover, it has become discriminatory and insufficient, not to say sparse.

The decade of the 1980s, a lost decade for the development of our countries, has also, paradoxically, been the decade during which the concept of the quality of life has become universal. Thus, rich countries have striven to implement social policies with the ultimate aim of securing the well-being of the human person. For their part, the poor countries, while ensuring the survival of their populations, now justly demand that development have a greater qualitative content.

Moreover, it seems that rich and poor have finally agreed to recognize the urgency of preserving and restoring our environment. It is to be hoped that this common heritage of mankind - endangered by the actions of the human race, and technological development principally - will be restored by the human race through the implementation of the latest techniques. The same applies to the survival of our planet and its civilizations. We must urgently orient research towards technologies that will reduce the emission of certain gases such as chlorofluorocarbons and carbon dioxide, responsible for the depletion of the ozone layer, the development of the greenhouse effect and acid rain, whose combined effects are irreversibly altering our environment.

The next United Nations Conference on the Environment, scheduled to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, will be the occasion for re-establishing a truth which seems to have been forgotten, namely, that development is indispensable for the well-being of people but at the same time it has its own limits. That appliles

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to the environment but also, and above all, to societies whose balance is frequently threatened by economic choices favouring development/growth to the detriment of the more harmonious development which encompasses all aspects of human life.*

As I stressed at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, that is where our conception diverges from that of the rich countries when we speak about such important ideas as democracy and human rights. I repeat here that for us the defence of democracy and of human rights comes via the promotion of a more just international economic order.

In this regard, we cannot pass over in silence our partners' failure to respect the goals set by common agreement here in the General Assembly and throughout the United Nations system for international economic co-operation for development. The poor results of both the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, held from 23 March to 1 April 1990, and the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris from 3 to 14 September, are clearly signs of a lack of political will. However, we hardly need recall that our countries have agreed to huge sacrifices to restore our macro-economic balance and have adopted bold programmes to stimulate growth, despite structural disorders and the profound crisis affecting the world economy. As far as Burkina Faso is concerned, we made our own adjustments several years before we appealed to the international financial institutions. We now expect the Bretton Woods institutions and our traditional partners to give us the new resources that will provide the revivifying oxygen necessary for economic recovery and for social well-being, which are objectives of our second five-year development plan.

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* The President returned to the chair.

(Mr. Vokouma, Burkina Faso)

The aim of the second plan is to consolidate the gains made in the priority sectors during the first plan, while stressing economic growth and human development.

On the domestic front still, since October 1977 Comrade President Blaise Compaore and the Popular Front have been working, within the framework of the People's Democratic Revolution, to create the fundamental and real conditions in which the people itself can take on the management and direction of their affairs. The first Congress of the Popular Front called for a constitutional process, and so, in 1991, there will be major electoral events in the country, enabling it to go on putting in place the political institutions in keeping with its people's requirements for social and political democracy.

Our ambitions are neither out of the ordinary nor out of place. They stem from the will to survive and to integrate ourselves into the community of nations. Generally speaking, we take as our basic objectives those set by the United Nations itself. These relate, inter alia, to food self-sufficiency, access to drinking water, primary health care, literacy and improving living conditions. To attain these objectives, which are the basis for all development, we are using our own territory and means; we are relying on the regional framework and South-South co-operation; and we welcome any contribution from outside our country and region consolidating the South-South co-operation effort and the North-South contract of solidarity.

In general terms, we are convinced that, for the pivotal decade of the 1990s, external assistance must be in large quantity and of good quality and must take account of the particularities of the recipients. We should therefore review the aid philosophy and try to solve the problem of poor countries' indebtedness in order to inject enough new resources into their economies for there to be growth and development. Unless adequate steps are taken, we fear that the impoverishment

(Mr. Vokouma, Burkina Faso)

and marginalization of whole nations will in time become a serious threat to international peace and security.

In this respect, East-West détente, the socio-political upheavals in Eastern Europe and the integration of the whole Eastern European region into the rest of Europe, which we see beginning, are consolidating the North-South divide. The Governments represented here and they alone are responsible for seeing to it that this new division in the world does not contain within it the seed of future conflicts.

Wisdom would dictate that the dividends of peace following on détente should serve peace through massive investment in development. Reason dictates that the North - that is, yesterday's East and West - should join forces to support the South in its daily struggle for survival, growth, development and a better life. The twenty-first century will, if we so desire, be the century of the greatest good for the greatest number. And is that not also democracy?

ADDRESS BY MR. HANS BRUNHART, PRIME MINISTER OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Hans Brunhart, Prime Minister of the Principality of Liechtenstein, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein, Mr. Hans Brunhart, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. BRUNHART (Liechtenstein): On 18 September, with you presiding, my country was admitted to the United Nations as the one hundred sixtieth Member. Today, for the first time as a speaker in the general debate of the General

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

Assembly, I am pleased to avail myself of this opportunity to wish you once again every success in your responsible tasks.

At the same time, I wish to thank all those delegations that greeted and welcomed Liechtenstein with such warmth on the occasion of our country's admission as a new Member of the United Nations.

My special thanks are due to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for his tireless devotion to accomplishing the tasks with which the United Nations has been entrusted.

On the occasion of the address of thanks which I delivered on 18 September, I had the opportunity to describe, briefly, the Principality of Liechtenstein, its bilateral and multilateral relations on a regional European and on a world-wide level and, in particular, the Principality's links established within the framework of the United Nations. Without wishing to repeat myself in this respect, I should like to outline a few aspects which have priority as far as my country's foreign policy is concerned, taking into account the fact that my country is now a Member of the United Nations.

You yourself, Mr. President, as well as previous speakers, have laid emphasis on the numerous and far-reaching changes that have taken place in the world in the recent past. New possibilities for peace and international co-operation have opened up, but we are also confronted with great dangers and risks, which will require co-operation by all countries if they are to be resolved.

In this connection, it goes almost without saying that a small country like Liechtenstein wishes to align itself with all those countries whose aim it is to settle disputes peacefully and to uphold the rule of law in the settlement of conflicts. International law is our protection and we are all called upon, now and in the future, to further its cause.

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

With this thought in mind, Liechtenstein condemns very strongly the flagrant violation of universally recognized international norms by Iraq in its occupation and annexation of Kuwait, and calls for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory. My country did not hesitate to implement the resolutions and measures adopted by the Security Council, even at a time when it was not yet a Member of the United Nations. It will continue to support the efforts exerted by the Security Council with a view to solving this serious crisis.

For us, international law is the pillar upon which every inter-State relationship must rest. My country will therefore support all efforts now and in future which may lead to the creation of a system of international law in the fields of security and human rights, and also of economic, technological and environmental policies. In so far as Liechtenstein is not yet a party to a number of agreements, my Government is examining the possibility of signing and ratifying United Nations legal instruments established in these fields.

It is in Europe, indeed, to which my country belongs, that we have observed and continue to observe that peaceful dialogue is possible across all frontiers and despite widely different situations in the countries concerned. As the recent past shows, such dialogue abolishes artificial and inhuman frontiers and may lead to a new and, as we all hope, strong and united Europe.

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

We hope that all efforts for a new Europe will be successful - particularly with regard to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, whose reforms are leading them to freedom and democracy, and where human rights and fundamental freedoms have been given the prominent place they deserve. As we all know, those are the main prerequisites for lasting peace. In that regard, I should like to wish the Federal Republic of Germany and the German people well-being and a prosperous future in view of the unification celebrated yesterday.

In the light of the universality of the United Nations - a principle that all Members States underlined when Liechtenstein was admitted as a Member of this family of nations - my country would welcome membership of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations. Nevertheless, in doing so I would like to express the hope that we shall all be able to witness the reunification of the Koreas in the not-too-distant future.

Next November's Paris meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe will provide a further guarantee for what has been achieved in Europe so far and at the same time, in line with our expectations, contribute significantly to stability and co-operation as well as to disarmament. It is also important for us in that regard that the Council of Europe, which provides an eminently suitable forum for the expansion of European co-operation, be considered whenever institutonal questions are being discussed.

However, questions concerning peace, security, disarmament and human rights cannot and should not be resolved by solutions that are related solely to Europe. Europe is a part of the world common to all of us, in which we realize daily the extent and increase of global mutual dependence.

The path towards a better future shall not become the private path of a privileged section of our community of States. In view of the favourably developing climate of co-operation between East and West, let us not lose sight of

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

the equally important dimension of the North-South relationship, nor of the co-operation with countries forming the major part of our world community. Those countries are facing extremely difficult problems that, in a vicious circle of cause and effect, will grow worse every day if joint steps are not undertaken to overcome them.

International solidarity is required of us all through co-operation and tangible help, taking account of the national characteristics, culture and identity of the countries and peoples concerned. We all know that real changes, economic success, the elimination of poverty and the raising of living standards cannot be achieved from one day to the other. Lasting peace is indivisible. Lasting well-being must also be indivisible.

We were therefore very pleased that at the World Summit for Children held last weekend, a Declaration and a Plan of Action on the survival, protection and development of children were adopted. We also attach value to the fact that the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which I signed last Sunday on behalf of my country, should get world-wide recognition.

As in the past, Liechtenstein will also be prepared in the future to make its contribution within the framework of international solidarity in favour of the developing countries. Special emphasis will continue to be placed on the support of concrete projects.

Also of common interest to everyone is the preservation of our environment. Its damage and destruction, with consequences extending beyond all frontiers, regardless of any geographical location, may well be disastrous for us all if determined action is not taken immediately. We look forward to the Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992. However, we cannot wait with measures to protect the environment until that conference is held, although, we trust, it will lead to tangible achievements and results.

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

From the viewpoint of a small country, I have endeavoured to portray just a few of the many subjects that are of concern to us all, and I should like to express the readiness of my Government and of the Liechtenstein delegation to participate, within our possibilities, in international co-operation, and in particular within the framework of the United Nations. In this spirit, I wish the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly full success.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Hans Brunhart, Prime Minister of the Principality of Liechtenstein, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. ADAN (Somalia): On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I should like to extend to you, Sir, most sincere felicitations on your unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. We feel confident that under your able leadership and wise guidance, which stem from your rich and varied experience in your country's public life and international diplomacy, we can look forward to the smooth and efficient conduct and successful outcome of the work of this session of the General Assembly. I would like to assure you of my delegation's unstinting co-operation in the achievement of these objectives.

I also take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the outstanding stewardship of your predecessor and our brother from Africa, Major-General Joseph Garba, who contributed to the successful outcome of the forty-fourth session of this body, including its sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth special sessions.

We pay our tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for his untiring efforts in making the United Nations an effective instrument for the promotion of world peace, security and development.

(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

It is with profound satisfaction that we welcome the emergence of a united Germany as a sovereign, independent State. The goal of German unification has been achieved through a peaceful democratic process and in exercise of the right of self-determination of the German people as a whole. Somalia extends heartfelt congratulations to the new State and looks forward to close and fruitful co-operation in the years ahead.

On behalf of my delegation, I also congratulate the Principality of Liechtenstein on its admission to membership of the United Nations.

Since our last session, Namibia has taken its rightful place in the comity of the world's free and independent nations. While we justly rejoice at that happy culmination of the long and arduous struggle of the brave Namibian people against an oppressive racist régime, we cannot forget that the basic structure of the system of apartheid still remains in place in South Africa. However, a number of positive developments in recent months provide hopeful signs. Most important among these developments are the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela and some other political leaders, and the lifting of the ban on the African National Congress of South Africa, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, and other political parties and organizations.*

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* Mr. Rukashaza (Rwanda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

Therefore, while there is reason for cautious optimism, especially in the context of the ongoing negotiations between the ANC, led by Mr. Nelson Mandela, and President F.W. de Klerk, the international community has a duty to continue to bring pressure to bear on the Pretoria régime until the latter brings about genuine reforms leading to the dismantling of apartheid and the establishment of a truly multiracial democratic society in South Africa. Until this happens, international sanctions against South Africa must continue to be maintained.

We are concerned about the large-scale violence and conflict within the black community in some of the townships in South Africa. We sincerely hope that the spirit of good will and understanding, which currently prevails in that country, will bring peace, tranquillity and harmony among the people in the affected areas.

The world today is passing through a period which is full of promise and, at the same time, has a potential for conflicts and confrontation. The end of the cold war era, dominated by ideological conflict, has ushered in a new era of understanding and co-operation. The recent spirit of conciliation and compromise among the major Powers would have been unthinkable only a short time ago. Today, it is clearly reflected in the near-unanimity of approach and action among the permanent members of the Security Council towards the peaceful resolution of global conflict situations.

In Europe, dramatic changes have taken place in the political and economic fields. The most vivid manifestation of this historic phenomenon is the rebirth of a single German State out of the two separate German entities, which until recently had divergent political ideologies. It also marks an important milestone in the history of Europe.

But this spirit of solidarity and unity is not manifested in Europe alone. In the Arabian peninsula, my delegation welcomes the unification of the two former

(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

States of Yemen, in the new Republic of Yemen. We congratulate the brotherly people of Yemen and wish them peace and prosperity. In the Korean peninsula, the Prime Ministers of the two Koreas have recently begun contacts with a view to initiating a climate of friendship and understanding, which could eventually lead to the realization of the shared aspirations of the peoples of the two countries for their peaceful reunification. The desire for unification cannot be regarded as being in contradiction with the membership of this universal body, as is clearly proven by the unification of the two Germanies and the two Yemens. In accordance with the principle of universality, Somalia supports the admission of both Koreas to the United Nations as full Members.

In South-East Asia, too, there is a gentle breeze of change. The recent breakthrough in the ongoing negotiations on the long and tragic conflict in Kampuchea provides new hope for peace in the region. We fervently hope that it will now be possible to achieve a comprehensive political settlement, satisfactory to all concerned, which will bring to an end the sufferings of the people of Kampuchea and enable them to rebuild their lives and their nation. We hope that the potential threat to peace and security in the region that this conflict has posed would thus be removed.

Nearer home, in the context of the progress which is being made in Western Sahara, my delegation feels confident that before long the efforts of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity and those of the Secretary-General of the United Nations will bear fruit in arriving at a satisfactory political solution to this vexed question.

Despite these favourable developments, it is regrettable that many conflicts still continue to rage, many injustices still remain to be corrected and many problems still remain to be resolved before we can confidently proclaim that mankind has overcome its primordial instinct and is now mature enough to achieve

(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

lasting peace based on justice. In the Middle East, in Afghanistan and in Cyprus, people continue to suffer the ravages of injustice and war. In Cyprus, only intercommunal talks and a genuine dialogue can show the way towards a just solution by peaceful means. It is our sincere hope that the parties involved will take advantage of the Secretary-General's mediation offer to find a solution, taking into account the fundamental rights of both the communities.

As to Afghanistan, the withdrawal of foreign troops had heightened expectations for an early resolution of the conflict. We are, however, concerned that the situation in the country continues to be marked by violence, bringing widespread suffering to the people of Afghanistan. Millions of Afghans, particularly women and children, are still in refugee camps, unable to return to their homes. We urge all the parties concerned to make every effort to resolve their differences and get on with the task of reconstruction of that territory, which has gone through years of destruction and devastation.

The most persistent and the most intransigent problem is that in the Middle East. For forty years, the situation in the Middle East has been the cause of tension resulting in several wars. It has destabilized countries, caused devastation to the people of the region and destroyed their lives by denying them their basic human rights. The root cause of this situation is clear and well-known: the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to their homeland. The situation has been further exacerbated by the continued Israeli occupation of Arab lands in defiance of the United Nations resolutions and in violation of international law. The courageous uprising, intifadah, of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza is an eloquent reminder that peace cannot be attained in the region unless the rights of the Palestinian people are fully restored.

(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

Somalia has consistently maintained that the only solution to this problem lies in the return of all Arab territories and the exercise of the inalienable right to self-determination by the Palestinian people. We have always extended our unequivocal support to our Palestinian brothers in their legitimate struggle. We continue to support the convening of the international conference on the Middle East with the participation of Palestine on an equal footing with other parties. We believe that such a conference will provide a unique opportunity for negotiations on the basis of the General Assembly resolutions on the Middle East.

Since last August, there has been a new and dangerous threat to international peace and security. Favourable political developments have been overshadowed by the grave developments in the Gulf. The invasion and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq has generated a global political and economic crisis. Our proximity to the conflict area and our fraternal ties with both Iraq and Kuwait make this situation all the more tragic and painful for us. Nor are we unaware of the political and economic consequences of this situation. The Gulf crisis has generated world-wide repercussions, causing military build-up and economic dislocation. However, the consequences of war would be much more dangerous and far-reaching. Somalia, therefore, is fully supportive of all efforts aimed at finding a political solution to the problem.

Somalia considers Iraq's action to be in violation of international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that a solution to the conflict can be achieved only on the basis of the following central elements: first, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of sovereignty and legitimacy in Kuwait; secondly, subsequent to the attainment of the aforementioned objective, negotiations should be undertaken

(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

in the search for a political solution to the differences between Kuwait and Iraq.

For Somalia, the situation in the Gulf is particularly painful, for it involves two fellow members of the Arab League, the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries with both of whom Somalia has close fraternal ties. We therefore wish to see an early resolution of this serious crisis in the interests of the peace and stability of the region.

I would now like to touch briefly upon the steps my Government has recently taken in the direction of the ongoing democratization process which it had initiated last year. On the recommendations of the Government, the People's Assembly has recently adopted the new amended Constitution which, inter alia, provides for a multiparty democracy, a free market economic system and the protection of fundamental human rights. Efforts are also under way to open meaningful dialogue with the opposition groups to promote peace and national reconciliation. The significant initiatives taken by my Government will no doubt contribute to the restoration of stability in the country and to the improvement of the economic and social conditions of our people.

Earlier in my address, I made a reference to the new and welcome changes that were sweeping the world. The end of the ideological confrontation between the super-Powers has helped to create new hopes for global peace and improvement in the human condition. These developments have brought about a trend towards conciliation and understanding on the part of the major Powers, and have opened up new possibilities for substantial progress on disarmament and arms reduction.

(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

However, the improvement in the East-West political climate has failed to make any impact, has done nothing to ameliorate the rapidly deteriorating economic conditions in much of the developing world. Deeply rooted inequities and imbalances continue to afflict inter-State relations, especially between the industrial and the developing countries. Many third-world countries continue to experience economic stagnation, increased poverty and an overall deterioration in the social progress of their peoples. In many of these countries the number of people living in poverty is increasing at an alarming pace. Today more than 1 billion people live in conditions of abject poverty. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization, the number of people who now lack food is estimated to be over 800 million and the number of people with serious health risks because of caloric deficiencies is about to reach the 400 million mark.

The debt problem, which emerged in almost all developing countries in the early 1980s, has since grown out of proportion and is now threatening to disrupt the social order and political stability of many third-world countries. Despite the endless and strenuous adjustment efforts and debt rescheduling by these countries, the prevailing international financial and monetary system makes it virtually impossible for the affected developing countries to cope with the burden. In his annual report on the work of the Organization for 1990, the Secretary-General points out that in 1989 alone $26 billion was transferred from the developing to the developed countries. This alone is a serious impediment to the efforts of the developing countries and must be stopped and reversed.

A number of new initiatives are in place, but what is required is a new, vigorous and dynamic debt strategy. Such a strategy must include debt cancellation as well as substantially increased resources.

(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

The problems of debt rescheduling and the net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries are closely linked to the problem facing the developing countries in the field of international trade. A viable and effective debt strategy would also need to provide for sustainable growth in developing countries, including in-depth measures designed to increase their export earning capacity.

The serious economic situation of the least developed countries should be a cause for grave concern. Increasing poverty, widespread hunger and malnutrition have become painful daily occurrences in many of these economies. We welcome the results of the recently concluded second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris. The Conference recognized the importance of national policies and their links to the international environment. Unfortunately, however, it was unable to reach an agreement on increased financial flows and on new measures to alleviate the debt burden of the least developed countries.

Speaking about my own country, Somalia is today faced wth serious economic problems. Like some of the other least developed countries in Africa, Somalia has to cope with the grave problem of the influx of a large number of refugees. This has caused shortages of food, and the Government is compelled to bear the heavy burden of these costs to the detriment of the country's economic growth and development.

We are grateful to the international agencies, and in particular to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for their assistance in trying to mitigate the situation. We would, however, like to urge them not only to continue the assistance but to redouble their efforts without allowing extraneous political considerations to interfere with the humanitarian cause.

(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

Let me refer to some positive developments on the economic scene. First, of course, is the positive outcome of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to international economic co-operation and in particular to the revitalization of the economic growth and development of the developing countries. The consensus arrived at in the Declaration augurs well for strengthened international economic co-operation. In this context we have also noted the calls from the Secretary-General as well as from other important world leaders for more orderly management of the world economy. We fully support the call for initiating a world-wide comprehensive dialogue on all complex economic issues to create a better future for mankind.

The start of the decade of the 1990s has witnessed the beginning of the end of the cold war and confrontation, especially between the super-Powers, which has, among other things, brought about a semblance of international security. None the less, our world remains at a cross-roads.

While the rivalry of the major-Powers in their race for the acquisition and stockpiling of deadly weapons has receded to a large extent, making the threat of the possible annihilation of mankind - if not of our planet itself - unlikely, a different kind of threat looms large before us and it is imperative that we take immediate preventive measures.

As I said earlier, deeply rooted inequities and imbalances continue to plague inter-State relations. These have inevitably given rise to wealth and prosperity for a few while the majority of the world's population is compelled to lead an existence of perennial poverty, hunger and dise se. Such wide disparities in the world's living standards are like a volcano which is bound to erupt at any moment, nullifying all the gains achieved at the political level.

(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

It should be apparent that such a dangerous situation cannot be met effectively without sustained and sincere efforts aimed at international co-operation and understanding. As the fountainhead of such a co-operative effort, the United Nations will have to play an active role not only in trying to ameliorate the miserable plight of the world's poor, but also in bringing about a just and equitable world order as stipulated in the Charter.

My delegation has no doubt that the Member nations, big and small, will rise to the occasion and extend their unstinted co-operation to the Organization in the fulfilment of this onerous task.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.